

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY

TASK 37 : UK COUNTRY REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2006

- The UK continues to be one of the largest producers of biogas from landfill gas
- The biogas is almost exclusively used for making electricity and the production of biogas is gradually increasing, but at a much slower same rate than its production is increasing in the rest of the world

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TASK 37 : UK COUNTRY REPORT

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- Recent attempts to upgrade this gas and inject it into the grid, or use this as a vehicle fuel have failed, or are faltering

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- Anaerobic digestion in the UK is not progressing as fast as in other countries
- Only two plants were opened this year:
 - Leicester** (MSW using a Ball Mill for pre-treatment)
 - Shropshire** (Sorted green waste)
- The Holsworthy plant is being refurbished with the digester being cleared of grit and new covers for holding tanks

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- One of the major advantages of the UK's membership of the IEA is that unbiased information about what is actually happening in the world on a particular subject, is readily available to UK industry and the UK government
- This was the main theme during "UK Bioenergy Day" held by the UK Department of Industry on 11th September 2006

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- Taking the Bioenergy Task 37 as an example, the country reports show how natural gas and biomethane (upgraded biogas) is being increasingly used as a vehicle fuel in the other member countries, whereas in the UK its use is decreasing

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- The UK seem to be going in a completely different direction to the rest of the world as far as the use of biogas as a vehicle fuel is concerned
- The country reports from Bioenergy Task 37 show how natural gas and biomethane (upgraded biogas) is being increasingly used as a vehicle fuel in the other member countries, whereas in the UK its use is decreasing

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- All over the world the use of natural gas vehicles is increasing and new filling stations are being built
- Except the UK where the use of gas vehicles is decreasing and filling stations are being closed down

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- This is entirely because of UK government policy is driving the UK transport industry in a completely different direction to the rest of the world, based on poor (or biased) advice from consultants and pressure groups who are either not aware of what is going on elsewhere, or who are deliberately misleading the UK Government for their own reasons

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- In the rest of the world biomethane is considered the most environmentally friendly of all the biofuels
- The IEA have also shown this is the case, beyond any doubt
- Why does the UK government not recognise this?

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- It is because Government policy in the UK is not directed by scientific fact or objective judgement or a concern for the environment or reducing greenhouse gases, but rather by pressure groups with vested interests

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- This is a serious allegation but it is my considered professional opinion, formed over a number of years, which can easily be justified by actual examples
- Herewith a single example from last week

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- In the UK last week the Renewable Energy Association held a major conference “Bioenergy 2006”
- The main part of the conference was entitled “Policy” but there was little, if any mention of Biogas and hardly any mention of Biogas in the conference papers on Transport
- A major presentation from Shell International completely failed to mention biogas, or indeed any gaseous fuel

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- This main conference was chaired by Lord Whitty and a significant number of senior MPs and senior government policy advisers were present, together with UK Government representatives from the Environment Agency, DEFRA, DTI, DfT, etc., and over 300 delegates who had paid about £600 each specifically to learn about the UK government policy on Biomass and Biofuels

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- The presentation from Shell started off with the definition of “Biofuels” but this differed from any of the internationally (or European Union) definitions of biofuel in that it did not include biogas
- Neither was there any mention of gaseous biofuels in any other part of the Shell presentation

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- The company is a significant employer in the UK and Shell International have millions of \$\$\$ in assets tied up in oil refineries, tankers, pipelines, storage tanks, filling stations, etc., the majority of this technology, in which Shell are world leaders, being based on liquid fuels
- Their interests are best served by promoting liquid fuels

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- There should be no criticism of Shell for wanting to promote only liquid fuel technologies
- If anybody is to be criticised it is the UK Government for being so influenced by vested interests
- The UK Government have not been using the information to which it is entitled by virtue of, for example, its membership of the IEA

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- Shell are just one example of a commercial organisation with a very sophisticated and well funded Public Relations department which acts as a pressure group to influence Government policies around the world
- The oil companies have been particularly successful in the UK because the UK Government is so weak

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Although the UK government state that they recognise that Natural Gas is the route to biomethane

UK government Departments are not:

- Using or recommending the use of natural gas or biogas as a vehicle fuel
- Encouraging Biogas is a renewable and environmentally friendly replacement for natural gas by lowering the duty rate

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The present position in the UK

- Gas filling stations are closing
- The number of gas vehicles is under 100
- Tax incentives are minimal
- There is no differentiation between Natural Gas and Biogas as far as Road Fuel Duty is concerned

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- New gas vehicle filling stations are built everywhere in the world, except the UK
- The ONLY place in the world where gas vehicle filling stations are actually being closed down is in the UK
- Correspondingly the UK is the only place in the world where the use of biogas or natural gas as a vehicle fuel is decreasing

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TASK 37 : ENERGY FROM BIOGAS

- Any suggestions?